

Message Text

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71

ACTION COA-02

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 DLOS-06 DEAE-00 INT-08 FBIE-00

L-03 SCSE-00 EB-11 SCA-01 COME-00 CG-00 SY-10 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 DRC-01

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R 142224Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 217

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

UNCLAS BOGOTA 9358

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CPRS (FISHING VESSEL GEMINI II)

SUBJECT: WRECKED U.S. FLAG VESSEL SEIZED BY COLOMBIAN NATIONAL

FOR: LEGATT

1. ON NOV 2 THE US. FISHING VESSEL GEMINI II, REGISTER 528158, 80 NET TONS, HOME PORT JACKSONVILLE, FLA. RAN AGROUND 80 METERS FROM COLOMBIAN COAST AT A PLACE CALLED PUNTA DEL PAJARO, 40 KMS NORTH OF RIOHACHA, CAPITAL OF DEPT. OF GUAJIRA.

2. EMB INFORMED OF DISASTER ON NOV 12 WHEN AMCIT RICHARD BENETT BARKER PHONED FROM BARRANQUILLA. BARKER IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF OWNER, JIM GAMMON OF DAYTONE, FLA. BARKER SAID THAT THE FOUR CREWMEMBERS WERE ATTACKED AND FORCED TO FLEE BY INDIANS WHO BOARDED THE SHIP, THAT VESSEL IS WORTH \$65,000 AND THE EQUIPMENT CARRIED AWAY BY THE ATTACKERS IS WORTH OVER \$20,000.

3. THE CREW WENT TO BARRANQUILLA WHERE THREE OF THEM EMPLANNED FOR THE U.S. BARKER ARRIVED FROM FLA. AND THE PORT CAPTAIN OF RIOHACHA INFORMED HIM THAT A COLOMBIAN NAMED AMILCAR MEZA AGUILAR HAS LAID CLAIM TO THE ABANDONED SHIP UNDER THE UNCLASSIFIED

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"CODE OF MARITIME COMMERCE". BARKER REQUESTED EMB'S ASSISTANCE

TO RECOVER THE VESSEL.

4. EMB CONTACTED THE MERCHANT MARINE DIVISION OF THE COLOMBIAN NAVY, WHO ALREADY IN POSSESSION OF REPORT FROM PORT CAPTAIN AT RIOHACHA.

5. MERCHANT MARINE PROMISED FULL INVESTIGATION AND INFORM EMB, MEANWHILE THEY REPORT THAT GEMINI II DID NOT HAVE PERMIT TO BE IN COLOMBIAN WATERS.

6. QUESTIONS MERCHANT MARINE WILL BE ASKING OWNERS ARE 1). WHY WAS BOAT IN COLOMBIAN WATERS WITHOUT OFFICIAL PERMIT; 2) WHAT WAS THE BOAT DOING SO CLOSE TO THE COAST; 3) WHY DID CREW FAIL TO REPORT THE ATTACK TO POLICE OR PORT AUTHORITIES AT RIOHACHA OR BARRANQUILLA.

COMMENT: COLOMBIAN AUTHORITIES ARE WELL AWARE THAT AREA WHERE GEMINI II RAN AGROUND IS FREQUENTED BY NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS BECAUSE OF PROXIMITY TO SIERRA NEVADA MOUNTAINS WHERE COCAINE AND MARIHUANA ARE PRODUCED IN LARGE QUANTITIES. OWNER WILL NO DOUBT BE ENTANGLED IN LONG COURT BATTLE IF HE WISHES TO RECOVER BOAT. BAKER HAS ALREADY HIRED A COLOMBIAN ATTORNEY. WHITE

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